

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4338
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BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: N.A.
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: PCE CONGRESS CONCLUDES AS EXPECTED; CARRILLO
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REF: MADRID 4300 NOTAL

1. SUMMARY: TO THE SURPRISE OF ABSOLUTELY NO ONE,
CARRILLO WAS CONFIRMED AS SEC GEN BY THE JUST-CONCLUDED
NINTH PCE CONGRESS, WHICH ALSO EXTENDED TO HIM A MASSIVE
MANDATE TO CONTINUE WITH HIS POLITICS OF ACCOMMODATION.

IN LINE WITH CARRILLO'S EFFORTS FURTHER TO BLUR THE LINE BETWEEN SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM, HIS REELECTION WAS ACCOMPANIED BY THE CONGRESS'S DECISION TO DELETE "LENINISM" FROM THE PARTY'S SELF-DEFINITION. ACCORDING TO PCE LEADERS, THIS MAKES THE SPANISH COMMUNISTS THE FIRST CP TO CEASE DESCRIBING ITSELF AS MARXIST-LENINIST. THE AUTHORITARIAN AND RATHER AMBIGUOUS WAY IN WHICH THIS WAS ACCOMPLISHED--E.G., "LENINISM" GOES BUT DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM AND EFFUSIVE PRAISE OF LENIN REMAIN--HAVE LED LOCAL OBSERVERS TO QUESTION WHETHER ANYTHING CONCRETE WAS REALLY ACHIEVED. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS A STEP OF CONSIDERABLE POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE WHICH WE BELIEVE HAS ONLY BEGUN THE SERIOUS DEBATE OVER WHAT SORT OF PARTY THE PCE WILL TURN OUT TO BE. END SUMMARY.

2. A WELL-WIRED CONGRESS. THE PCE, APRIL 19-22, WENT THROUGH THE MOTIONS OF WHAT CLEARLY WAS A WELL ORCHESTRATED NINTH PARTY CONGRESS. BY THE TIME SEGEN SANTIAGO CARRILLO RANG DOWN THE CURTAIN, THE DELEGATES HAD:

--APPROVED THE POLITICAL REPORT OF THE OUTGOING CENTRAL COMMITTEE (CC), WHICH WAS READ BY CARRILLO THE FIRST DAY (REFTEL), BY A VOTE OF 898 TO 37, WITH 51 ABSTENTIONS;

--ACCEPTED, WITH SOME MODIFICATIONS, THE 15 PROPOSED POLITICAL THESES (INCLUDING THE DELETION OF LENINISM) LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND THE NEW PARTY STATUTES; AND

--ELECTED A NEW, EXPANDED (160 MEMBERS) CC, WHICH IN TURN CHOSE THE NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND "UNANIMOUSLY" REELECTED DOLORES IBARRURI (LA PASIONARIA) PRESIDENT AND CARRILLO SEGEN.

THE CONGRESS WAS THEN PUNCTUATED APRIL 23 BY A MASS RALLY IN A MADRID BULL RING, WHERE PCE ECONOMIST TAMON TAMAMES WAS CONFIRMED AS THE PARTY'S CANDIDATE FOR MAYOR OF MADRID, TO BE FOLLOWED APRIL 24 BY A SIMILAR RALLY IN BARCELONA.

3. CARRILLO GETS HIS MANDATE. THE OVERWHELMING APPROVAL OF THE POLITICAL REPORT, THE 15 THESES AND THE NEW STATUTE CONSTITUTED A MASSIVE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE FOR CARRILLO AND A MANDATE FOR HIM TO CARRY ON WITH HIS POLITICS OF ACCOMMODATION. EVEN SO, THE LEADERSHIP'S PROPOSALS DID NOT SAIL THROUGH UNSCATHED, AND A NUMBER OF AMENDMENTS INTRODUCED IN COMMITTEE AND APPROVED ON THE FLOOR CLEARLY WERE AIMED AT PUTTING CARRILLO ON NOTICE THAT, WHILE HE HAD DONE WELL, HE HAD NOT DONE NEARLY AS WELL AS A NUMBER

OF SELF-CONGRATULATORY FORMULATIONS IN THE ORIGINAL DRRFTS
IMPLIED. THE MESSAGE ALSO CAME THROUGH CLEARLY THAT
MANY IN THE PARTY EXPECT TO BE CONSULTED MUCH MORE THAN
IN THE PAST, AND THAT THEY WILL DO THEIR BEST TO INSIST
ON IT. FOR EXAMPLE:

--A NUMBER OF AMENDMENTS WERE INTRODUCED IN THESIS
1 (CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROCESS OF CHANGE) MODERATING
ITS "EXCESSIVE OPTIMISM" AND EXPLICITLY POINTING OUT THAT,

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CONTRARY TO THE ORIGINAL WORDING, THE SPANISH TRANSITION
HAD NOT TAKEN PLACE IN THE FORM ("RUPTURA") THAT THE PCE
LEADERSHIP HAD INSISTED WAS THE ONLY POSSIBLE ROAD FROM

DICTATORSHIP TO DEMOCRACY FOR SPAIN. THEY ALSO REDUCED THE IMPORTANCE ASCRIBED BY THE ORIGINAL DRAFT TO THE ROLE OF SUAREZ AND HIS GOVT IN THE TRANSITION.
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-MODIFICATIONS TO THESIS 3 (POLICY OF DEMOCRATIC CONCENTRATION) AND 4 (SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MONCLOA ACTS) REDUCED THE IMPORTANCE ATTRIBUTED TO THE PARTY'S MODEST (9.24PERCENT) ELECTORAL SHOWING (WHICH THE ORIGINAL DRAFT HAD CHARACTERIZED AS "EXTREMELY STRONG POPULAR BACKING") AND TONED DOWN THE LONG-TERM SIGNIFICANCE ASCRIBED TO THE MONCLOA PACTS, WHILE STILL CALLING THEM "ESSENTIAL" FOR NOW. AMENDMENTS ALSO ACCENTED THE PARTY'S COMMITMENT TO "MASS MOBILIZATIONS" IN SUPPORT OF THE PACTS.
4. THE PRIMACY OF LABOR. THESIS 6 (TOWARD SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DEMOCRACY, SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM) REPORTEDLY ENGENDERED THE MOST INTENSE DISCUSSION IN COMMITTEE, WHERE BOTH MAJORITY AND MINORITY TENDENCIES AGREED THAT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORKING CLASS IN THE "ALLIANCE OF THE FORCES OF LABOR AND CULTURE..." HAD TO BE HIGHLIGHTED, BUT DISAGREED ON THE APPROPRIATE WORDING. THE AMENDMENT WHICH PREVAILED ADDED THE PHRASE, "OF WHICH THE WORKING CLASS IS THE AXIS."

5. LENINISM: NO, BUT...IN CONTRAST TO THE DEBATE ON THESIS 6, CONSIDERATION OF CONTROVERSIAL THESIS 15, WHICH CHANGES THE PARTY'S SELF-DEFINITION FROM "MARXIST-LENINIST" TO "MARXIST, REVOLUTIONARY AND DEMOCRATIC," TURNED OUT TO BE ANTICLIMACTIC, THOUGH PICTURESQUE NONETHELESS, AS THOSE SUPPORTING THE DELETION OF LENINISM CARRIED WATER ON BOTH SHOULDERS BY SIMULTANEOUSLY PRAISING LENIN EFFUSIVELY. PARTY NUMBER-TWO MAN SIMON SANCHEZ MONTERO, FOR EXAMPLE, DEFENDED THE LEADERSHIP'S PROPOSAL WHILE EULOGIZING LENIN AS "THE GREATEST REVOLUTIONARY IN HISTORY" AND CLAIMING THAT LENIN, IF HE WERE ALIVE TODAY, WOULD DO THE SAME THING. A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CATALAN PSUC THEN GAVE A LUKEWARM DEFENSE
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OF RETAINING LENINISM, AND THE VOTE WAS TAKEN, WITH 968 DELEGATES VOTING FOR DELETION, 248 VOTING AGAINST, 40 ABSTAINING, AND 6 EVEN VOTING AGAINST BOTH RETENTION AND DELETION.....

6. CARRILLO, WHO HAD, IN AN EARLIER INTERVIEW WITH THE

PCE-LINING MAGAZINE "LA CALLE," DEFENDED HIS HURRIED OFFENSIVE TO DELETE LENINISM AS AN "EFFORT TO MAKE UP FOR 30 YEARS OF LOST TIME," RAISED FURTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS REAL INTENTIONS WHEN, IN HIS CLOSING ADDRESS TO THE CONGRESS, HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE HAD NO INTENTION OF JETTISONING DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM. "WE ARE ALL MARXISTS, REVOLUTIONARIES AND DEMOCRATS, AND WE ALL CONSIDER LENIN THE GREATEST REVOLUTIONARY OF OUR EPOCH AND WILL CONTINUE TO STUDY HIM AS A TEACHER. WE DO NOT RENOUNCE DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM, BUT OUR DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH BUREAUCRATIC CENTRALISM NOR WITH THAT WHICH WE HAD TO EMPLOY IN CLANDESTINITY."

7. THE "NEW" LEADERSHIP. THE ASSEMBLED DELEGATES ON APRIL 22 ELECTED THE NEW 160-MEMBER CC BY SECRET BALLOT (ALTHOUGH THE ANNOUNCED RESULTS DID NOT INDICATE THE NUMBER OF VOTES WON BY EACH CANDIDATE). THE "OFFICIAL" LIST PRESENTED BY THE CANDIDACY COMMITTEE WAS VOTED IN WITH ONLY ONE EXCEPTION, A CANDIDATE FOR ASTURIAS WHO ASKED, FOR PERSONAL REASONS, THAT HE NOT BE ELECTED. ALL OF THE MAJOR INCUMBENTS REPORTEDLY WERE REELECTED. AMONG THE 50 CANDIDATES WHO WERE ELECTED TO THE CC FOR THE FIRST TIME WERE LABOR LAWYER CRISTINA ALMEIDA, WORKERS COMMISSIONS NOTABLE FIDEL ALONSO, PARLIAMENTARY DEPUTY FRANCISCO CABRAL (WHO REPLACED POET RAFAEL ALBERTI IN THE CONGRESS), AND APPARATCHIK ENRIQUE CUIEL. THE FULL LIST OF SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES AND THEIR BIOGRAPHIES HAVE NOT

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (LINE ADDED TO PARA 10)

BEEN PUBLISHED, BUT IT APPEARS THE NEW CC INCLUDES A LARGE
NUMBER OF WORKERS COMMISSIONS (SWC) REPRESENTATIVES AND
MORE CATALAN PSUC FIGURES THAN DID THE OUTGOING CC.

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8. AFTER THE CC ELECTION RESULTS WERE ANNOUNCED, THE COMMITTEE THEN WENT BEHIND CLOSED DOORS TO ELECT NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, TO WHICH 12 NEW MEMBERS REPORTEDLY WERE CHOSEN, INCLUDING SWC LEADERS NICOLAS SARTORIUS, JULIAN ARIZA, AND EDUARDO SABORIDO, AS WELL AS BASQUE COMMUNIST LEADER ROBERTO LERCHUNDI AND PSUC "MODERATE" JORDI SOLE TURA. PASIONARIA AND CARRILLO WERE THEN "UNANIMOUSLY" REELECTED.

9. COMMENT: IN ADDITION TO THE CONFIRMATION OF CARRILLO' LEADERSHIP POSITION, TWO CONGRESS RESULTS OF PARTICULAR NOTE ARE THE RATIFICATION OF THE GROWING IMPORTANCE OF THE SWC WITHIN THE PARTY AND THE MORE TANGIBLE ACCEPTANCE OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PSUC, WHICH MAY LEAD TO GREATER EFFECTIVE AUTONOMY FOR THE CATALAN BRANCH OF THE PARTY. (THE CONGRESS ALSO FORMALLY RECOGNIZED THE AUTONOMY OF THE BASQUE AND GALICIAN BRANCHES, BUT IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHAT THIS WILL MEAN IN REAL POLITICAL TERMS.) THE PCE'S MODEST JUNE 1977 ELECTORAL SHOWING, CONTRASTED NOW WITH THE SWC'S FIRST-PLACE SYNDICAL ELECTION RESULTS, PROBABLY MADE A MORE ASSERTIVE SWC ROLE WITHIN THE PARTY INEVITABLE. THE INCREASING RELATIVE WEIGHT OF THE LABOR COMPONENT WITHIN THE PCE POINTS TO A CONTINUATION OF THE DEBATE (AS IN THESIS 6) OVER HOW BROAD THE PARTY'S POLITICAL EMBRACE SHOULD BE AND WHERE ITS PRINCIPAL EMPHASIS SHOULD LIE. THE NOW BETTER REPRESENTED SWC IS LIKELY TO ARGUE FOR A MORE

SECTARIAN PCE POLICY, WITH LESS EMPHASIS ON BROADENING ITS BASE OF SUPPORT, WHILE CARRILLO CONTINUES TO INSIST ON THE NEED TO ATTRACT LARGE NUMBERS OF WHITE COLLAR WORKERS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE MIDDLE CLASS.

10. THE PARTY'S DELETION OF LENINISM FROM ITS SELF-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DEFINITION PROVOKED A COMMENT FROM PSOE LEADER AND PCE BETE NOIRE ENRIQUE MUGICA (A FORMER COMMUNIST), WHO TOLD THE PRESS, "WHILE THE PCE FORMALLY REJECTS THE TERM LENINISM, IT REAFFIRMS ITS PRINCIPAL SIGNS OF IDENTITY AND ITS BLOOD-RELATIONSHIP WITH THE STALINIST TRADITION. IT MAINTAINS DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM AND STRENGTHENS THE POWER OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL, WHICH MEANS IN FACT THAT EVERYTHING CONTINUES AS BEFORE. PARAPHRASING LENIN HIMSELF, THEY TAKE A STEP FORWARD TO THEN CORRECT IT WITH A STEP BACK." MUGICA'S POLEMIC NOTWITHSTANDING, HOWEVER, "DEFENESTRATING" LENIN, EVEN IF ONLY OPPORTUNISTICALLY, IS OBVIOUSLY A STEP OF CONSIDERABLE POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE BOTH WITHIN SPAIN AND ABROAD. IT IN ANY EVENT CLEARLY HAS NOT TERMINATED THE DEBATE OVER WHETHER THE PCE; IT HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN IT AND CARRILLO, FOR HIS OWN REASONS, CONTINUES TO RIDE POINT OR "EUROCOMMUNISM," AND TO DRAG THE PCE BEHIND HIM ALONG WHAT REMAINS AN UNCHARTED COURSE. STABLER

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